

Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman* in Two Archival Recordings

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1

As a play-within-a-play, the dream sequence in act 3 in Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman* seems to defy critics, scholars, and theatre practitioners who attempt to weigh its worth in proportion to the play that has four acts. Keith M. May, among others, reminds us that "[w]hile [the dream sequence] neatly forms part of the third act, it may just as neatly be excised [when the play is put on stage], and usually is" (170). David J. Gordon finds in the language of the dream sequence "the kind of conceptual concentration, freed of time-space limitations, that we associate with poetry" (112), which he puts in perspective somewhat cryptically: "[A]ct 3 [by which Gordon means the dream sequence] shows us language as action whereas the other acts, like most drama, shows [sic] us action as language" (112). Most notably, in his canonical *Bernard Shaw: A Critical View*, Nicholas Grene probes into the dream sequence, spelling out what he regards as its fundamental problem (61-62). Grene pays particular attention to the "technique of dialectic" (61) in the dream sequence, which he discusses by drawing on an analogy between Plato and Shaw (61-62). Having pointed out that the philosopher and the author of *Man and Superman* "both believed in . . . argument through interlocutors as the basic method of truth-seeking" (61), Grene delineates carefully what he detects in Plato's work and not in Shaw's, namely, "[t]he change of mode from argument to myth" (61). According to Grene, Plato's readiness for that kind of "change" seems to "[suggest] that beyond a certain point it is not possible to convey ultimate realities by direct but only by metaphoric discourse" (61). Turning then to the dream sequence, Grene dismantles our assumption that the sequence is to *Man and Superman* what the Myth of Er is to Plato's *The Republic* (61):

[The dream sequence] is conceived as a level beyond and outside the representational interplay of character and action. But unlike in Plato, it is not a significantly different type of discourse; instead it is merely a purer, more intense form of argumentative debate with [Don] Juan taking [Jack]

Tanner's Socratic role. The issues are made more abstract, more fully philosophic in *Don Juan in Hell* [the dream sequence], but we never move into the indirect and symbolic mode represented by the Platonic myth. (61-62)

Greene concludes that the dream sequence, with its "continuous clarity," cannot but be "very undream-like" (62).

Drawing on those critical opinions, we might look at another crucial aspect to the dream sequence. The play-within-the-play cites the opera *Don Giovanni* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: three fragments from the opera, consisting of eight bars, four bars, and four bars respectively, are printed as part of the stage directions in the published play-text (Shaw, *Man and Superman* 631-32); Shaw also makes characters in the dream sequence utter the name Mozart and even sing a tune from *Don Giovanni* (641, 645, 646, 648, 688). While acknowledging that the dream sequence, the setting for which being "Hell," traces its concept and realisation not merely to "traditional Christian symbolism" (Gahan 11) but to William Blake, Orpheus, and *The Frogs* by Aristophanes (11), this essay will focus on the Mozart opera as what makes the sequence possible.

How did Shaw view opera and drama in their late-Victorian/early-Edwardian commercial and aesthetic capacities? From what we find in the reviews and articles written by Shaw, it may possibly be claimed that "Shaw recognized no fixed invisible bar between opera and drama such as, in some quarters, made the opera house respectable and the theater immoral" (Meisel 40). For Shaw, according to Martin Meisel, drama was "a broad spectrum which terminate[d] at one end in opera" (40). We nonetheless should remind ourselves that, in his writings, Shaw was hardly in the habit of reappraising works of opera by the measure of the "broad spectrum"—he would more likely speak for opera in terms of where it came from and what it led to historically. A case in point is *Don Giovanni* as Shaw refers to it in *The Perfect Wagnerite*. What Shaw famously does in the book is to contextualise the opera so that it will be regarded by those concerned as a kind of precursor to "music drama," namely, the works of Richard Wagner. According to Shaw, "Mozart's *Don Giovanni* had made all musical Europe conscious of the enchantments of the modern orchestra and of the perfect adaptability of music to the subtlest needs of the dramatist" (*The Perfect Wagnerite* 292; italics added). Shaw continues: "After the finales in [*The Marriage of*] *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, the possibility of the modern music drama lay bare" (292; italics added). We might go back to Meisel, then, and assert that, on

some occasions, the “broad spectrum” may be represented by works of opera while, on other occasions, it may just as effectively be embodied by music drama. What about Shaw’s own dramatic works? Do they, and if we adapt Meisel’s term, position themselves in the “spectrum”’s other *terminus*?

We seem to have no problem in placing Shaw’s dramatic works at the other terminus. It must be remembered, though, that Shaw was a playwright who progressed stylistically—for better or worse. According to Leon Hugo, a play like *Man and Superman* was an outcome of Shaw reacting to a “new impulse” at the turn of the twentieth century:

[Shaw’s] plays were rooted in the theatrical stock-in-trade of the immediate and often comparatively distant past, and in this sense at least he retained ingredients of the “well-made” recipe, particularly in his early plays, where the situational clichés of comedy and melodrama, subverted to serve Shavian paradox and common sense, are the backbone of his drama. However, at the beginning of the Edwardian years a new impulse may be detected, as though the headlong proliferation of heresies and immoralities had imperatively to be accommodated in a format of increased range and scope, in a play which, if it was “not a play” in the conventional sense, managed conspicuously well to serve Shaw’s expanding needs. This impulse declares itself in the first of the Edwardian plays, *Man and Superman*. . . . (232)

So long as *Man and Superman* is “not” a traditional “play,” fragments of music from *Don Giovanni* forming part of the stage directions in the dream sequence and characters referring to the opera in their lines in that sequence are no mere musical or verbal homage paid by the author of the play to the composer of the opera. We can turn to Agnes Heller: “It would be a misunderstanding to believe that only the play *within* the play references Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, and not the social comedy [acts 1, 2, and 4 in *Man and Superman*] as well” (183), since “[i]n Shaw it is Mozart/[Lorenzo] Da Ponte’s story of *Don Giovanni*—not just the legend of *Don Juan*—that becomes comic” (181-82). As J. L. Wisenthal points out,

[Jack Tanner in act 4 in *Man and Superman*] come[s] to the realization that to marry Ann means a eugenic evolutionist’s Heaven rather than (as be [sic] believed before the dream sequence in Act 3) a sentimental voluptuary’s Hell. Thus Mozart’s tragedy is turned into Shavian comedy—a transformation that is highly characteristic of Shaw’s dramaturgy. (292)

It follows that we may regard the whole *Man and Superman*, and not simply the dream sequence, as a “paraphrasis” (Heller 181) of *Don Giovanni*. Shaw pulls off “the deconstruction of the Don Juan myth” (Heller 182) in the play, whose subtitle, after all, is *A Comedy and a Philosophy*.

We are led to assume that a group of string and wind instrument players—an octet, say, if not a full orchestra—will be indispensable when the play is performed in its entirety. What decisions do productions of *Man and Superman* make when it comes to quoting—musically—from *Don Giovanni*? In the dream sequence, Shaw’s stage directions also refer to Charles Gounod and his music. In what manners do productions introduce the Gounod music and let it mingle with *Don Giovanni*? Productions, furthermore, may use music at any moment in the play. Does the music in the dream sequence relate to the music in the rest of act 3 and also the other three acts? By examining two of the four-act productions of *Man and Superman* from the late twentieth century, I will try and give partial answers to those questions. My analysis and discussion will draw on two sound-only recordings which are archived in the British Library. One is a recording of the performance on 6 February 1981 of the National Theatre production of *Man and Superman* which premiered in the Olivier Theatre at the National Theatre in January of that year. The other is a recording of the radio production of *Man and Superman* which was first broadcast on BBC [the British Broadcasting Corporation] Radio 3 on 20 October 1996. Originally on analogue tape, the sound in each of the two recordings has been digitised by the Library staff for repeated listening. Since the digitised versions are not openly accessible, I have listened to them on the SoundServer system in the Library building at St. Pancras.

I will first analyse the recording of the National Theatre performance; the notes that I have taken while listening to the recording will be matched to the play-text of *Man and Superman* and relevant musical scores. I will then turn to the recording of the radio production for a comparative analysis. Finally, the two recordings will be discussed together.

2

Michael Billington mentions music twice in his review, for *The Guardian*, of the opening night performance of the National Theatre production of *Man and Superman*. On both occasions, Billington writes about the characters’ lines in the dream sequence: Don Juan, Doña Ana de Ulloa, the Statue, and the Devil together make up “a blend of Shavian debate and Mozartian quartet” and “[the] production . . . does justice . . . to the beguiling music of [Shaw’s] prose.” The

critic makes no comment on any of the actual musical fragments in the production. As we will see, the recording of the February performance reveals a variety of decisions that the production has made in transforming the play-text's references to music into actual fragments of music.

In the production, as indeed in the play-text, it is the character Mendoza moaning over Louisa, the “woman [he] loved” (*Man and Superman* 625), that bridges the gap between the *real* world, set in the Sierra Nevada, and the dream sequence. The recording (T4102, part 2) tells us that the final few words in Mendoza's speech, “I love thee, Louisa; Louisa, Louisa, Louisa, I—” (*Man and Superman* 631), clash head-on with the beginning of some loud and synthesised sound effects; we then hear a cluster of synthesised sounds explode. Out of that rather cosmic soundscape emerges the first of the three fragments, played by a full orchestra,¹ which the stage directions in the play-text quote from *Don Giovanni* [hereafter, fragment *A*]; the orchestra, in accordance with the score by Mozart (Mozart 3-5), plays on beyond the eight bars that appear in Shaw's stage directions, for 17 more bars, to be exact; the synthesised sound effects are heard in parallel to the Mozart (00:53:38-54). We note that the second fragment that the stage directions in the play-text quote from the opera [hereafter, fragment *B*] is cut entirely in the production. Fragment *A* instead leads to the clarinet playing the note F, the opening note in the third and final fragment that the stage directions quote from the opera [hereafter, fragment *C*]; the clarinet sustains the note to reintroduce the rest of the orchestra; fragment *C* has four bars, but the orchestra plays on for four more bars to repeat the melody (Mozart 370-71); the music then fades to be succeeded by the first of the lines which the character Old Woman [Doña Ana de Ulloa, hereafter, Ana] utters, “Excuse me; but I am so lonely; and this place is so awful” (*Man and Superman* 633); the synthesised soundscape disappears, too (00:53:54-54:23). We learn from the stage directions in the play-text that fragments *A* and *C* each accompany Don Juan and Ana entering the stage (*Man and Superman* 632-33).

The production reuses fragment *C* when the Old Woman “*becomes a young one*” (*Man and Superman* 638), even though the stage directions in the play-text do not mention any musical accompaniments for that particular moment in the dream sequence. The recording (T4102, part 2) tells us that, with the Old Woman's line “However, 27 be it” (638) as a cue, the orchestra starts playing fragment *C*; the music fades with a dissonant chord, though, giving a twist to the score by Mozart (00:59:57-01:00:10).

When the Statue makes his entrance, the stage directions in the play-text

point verbally to the chords from *Don Giovanni*: “Two great chords rolling on syncopated waves of sound break forth: D minor and its [sic] dominant: a sound of dreadful joy to all musicians” (*Man and Superman* 640). Listening to that part of the recording (T4103, part 3), we first note that the production has cut the dialogue between Don Juan and Ana about the vandalism of the dead Commendatore’s statue; even Don Juan’s line “Hush! Listen!” (*Man and Superman* 640), which in the play-text draws Ana’s attention to the imminent musical chords, has been deleted. Ana’s line “Has the terrible judgment of which my father’s statue was the minister taught you no reverence?” (640) therefore leads directly to Don Juan’s lines “Ha! Mozart’s statue music. It is your father. You had better disappear until I prepare him” (641). The recording tells us that Ana’s final word, “reverence,” gives a cue for the loud and synthesised sound effects, which we heard along with fragments A and C, to return. Don Juan’s words “It is your father” trigger the beginning of the overture to the opera, which, of course, is in D minor (Mozart 1); the orchestra plays the opening 11 bars of the overture, but the tempo slows down in an exaggerated manner, which, again, is a twist to the score by Mozart; the synthesised sound effects continue in parallel to the music; Don Juan utters his lines “Ah, here you are, my friend. Why dont [sic] you learn to sing the splendid music Mozart has written for you?” (*Man and Superman* 641) as the music and the synthesised soundscape fade (00:03:31-04:12).

The Statue wants the Devil to join him and the other two characters, Don Juan and Ana, in a discussion which has to do with “this place,” that is, “Hell” (*Man and Superman* 642). The Devil, however, is not a character in *Don Giovanni*. Shaw turns to Gounod for the source of a musical fragment that accompanies the entrance of the Devil:

THE STATUE. Let us give him a call.

At the wave of the [S]tatuë’s hand the great chords roll out again: but this time Mozart’s music gets grotesquely adulterated with Gounod’s. A scarlet halo begins to glow; and into it the Devil rises, very Mephistophelean. . . .
(*Man and Superman* 643)

On the one hand, it would not be difficult for any reader of the play-text to guess which of the Gounod operas Shaw has in mind. The opera would most certainly be *Faust*, in which the character Mephistopheles has a crucial part. The stage directions, on the other hand, provide us with no clues as to which chords or melodies from *Faust* we might hear. It seems that *any* fragment from that

opera will do the job, namely, to “*grotesquely adulterat[e]*” Mozart’s chords. That assumption is supported by what Shaw writes in his de facto preface [“Epistle Dedicatory”] to *Man and Superman*: “[O]ne bar of the voluptuous sentimentality of Gounod or [Georges] Bizet would appear as a licentious stain on the score of *Don Giovanni*” (*Man and Superman* 500; italics added). The recording (T4103, part 3) first tells us that the stage direction “*the great chords roll out again*” is executed faithfully in the production, with the orchestra playing the opening two chords in the overture to *Don Giovanni* (Mozart 1); the orchestra, however, is immediately taken over by loud and synthesised sound effects; a totally different kind of sound then emerges out of that soundscape, which we soon recognise as a snare drum roll; the rolling sound brings in the rest of the orchestra, which plays a set of chords that opens the prelude, in F-sharp minor, to act 5 scene 4, known as the “Prison Scene,” in *Faust* (Gounod 421); after playing the set of chords, the orchestra continues for two more bars which contain a melody; the Devil greets the Statue, Don Juan, and Ana (*Man and Superman* 643), which gives a cue for the music and the synthesised soundscape to fade (00:06:26-07:08). In short, the chords in D minor by Mozart metamorphose into the chords in F-sharp minor by Gounod, with the synthesised sound effects being a kind of buffer between the two keys.

At one point in the dream sequence, the Statue and the Devil sing a fragment of a melody from *Don Giovanni*. Shaw in the play-text indicates the melody by quoting some words from a song for Don Giovanni, “Vivan le femmine, viva il buon vino, sostegno e gloria d’umanità,” which appears in act 2 scene 14 in the opera (*Man and Superman* 645; Mozart 396). The production has cut the song altogether—neither the Statue nor the Devil will ever sing for the duration of the dream sequence in the production.

Towards the end of the dream sequence, all the four characters exit the stage rather flamboyantly. According to the stage directions in the play-text, Don Juan’s departure should involve some musical fragments:

DON JUAN. I can find my own way to Heaven, Ana; not yours (*he vanishes.*)

ANA. How annoying!

THE STATUE. (*calling after [Don Juan]*) Bon voyage, Juan! (*He wafts a final blast of his great rolling chords after him as a parting salute. A faint echo of the first ghostly melody comes back in acknowledgment.*) Ah! there he goes. (*Man and Superman* 687)

Listening to the recording (T4103, part 4), we note that the stage directions are duly executed in the production: the orchestra plays the opening two chords in the overture to *Don Giovanni*; the second of the chords, however, is not played very clearly and is taken over by what sounds like an improvisatory melody, played by the clarinet; that leads to the orchestra playing bar 8 in “*the first ghostly melody*,” namely, fragment A; the orchestra continues playing for another bar so that we can hear the end of the melody; with the Statue’s “Ah! there he goes,” the music fades (00:00:37-51).

By contrast, the stage directions in the play-text indicate no musical accompaniments when the Statue, the Devil, and Ana exit the stage:

THE STATUE. . . . (*He places himself on the grave trap beside [t]he Devil. It begins to descend slowly. Red glow from the abyss.*) Ah, this reminds me of old times.

THE DEVIL. And me also.

ANA. Stop! (*The trap stops.*)

THE DEVIL. You, Señora, cannot come this way. You will have an apotheosis. But you will be at the palace before us.

ANA. That is not what I stopped you for. Tell me: where can I find the Superman?

THE DEVIL. He is not yet created, Señora.

THE STATUE. And never will be, probably. Let us proceed: the red fire will make me sneeze. (*They descend.*)

ANA. Not yet created! Then my work is not yet done. (*Crossing herself devoutly*) I believe in the Life to Come. (*Crying to the universe*) A father! a father for the Superman!

She vanishes into the void; and again there is nothing; all existence seems suspended infinitely. (Man and Superman 689)

The recording tells us that, to mark the departure of the Devil and the Statue, the production has chosen to reuse the beginning of the prelude to the “Prison Scene” in *Faust*: the snare drum starts rolling to coincide with the Statue’s “Ah, this reminds me of old times”; the rest of the orchestra comes in and plays the beginning of the set of chords; Ana’s call for a stop also halts the orchestra; it is when the Devil and the Statue resume “*descend[ing]*” that the snare drum starts again, which reintroduces the rest of the orchestra; towards the end of the set of chords, the orchestra fades to introduce Ana’s “Not yet created!” (00:02:51-

03:24). When Ana “*vanishes into the void*,” the orchestra returns: it tunes itself instead of playing any fragment (00:03:36-03:46). The orchestra, in other words, gets ready to start afresh, which marks the end of the dream sequence.

No matter what scholars say about the influence of *Don Giovanni* on the overall structure and narrative of *Man and Superman*, the fact remains that the Mozart opera is quoted in the dream sequence and nowhere else in the play-text. We therefore find it hardly surprising that, when it provides musical accompaniments for act 1, act 2, and the parts which precede and follow the dream sequence in act 3, the National Theatre production does not borrow any chords or melodies from *Don Giovanni*. Act 4 in the production is the exception. One of the dialogues between Ann and Tanner in that act goes as follows:

TANNER. The will is yours then! The trap was laid from the beginning.

ANN. (*concentrating all her magic*) From the beginning—from our childhood—for both of us—by the Life Force.

TANNER. I will not marry you. I will not marry you.

ANN. Oh, you will, you will.

TANNER. I tell you, no, no, no.

ANN. I tell you, yes, yes, yes.

TANNER. No.

ANN. (*coaxing—imploring—almost exhausted*) Yes. Before it is too late for repentance. Yes.

TANNER. (*struck by the echo from the past*) When did all this happen to me before? Are we two dreaming?

ANN. (*suddenly losing her courage, with an anguish that she does not conceal*) No. We are awake; and you have said no: that is all.

TANNER. (*brutally*) Well?

ANN. Well, I made a mistake: you do not love me. (*Man and Superman* 728-29)

Listening to the recording (T4103, Part 4), we note that, with Ann’s “From the beginning” as a cue, the orchestra starts performing a heavily romanticised arrangement of fragment C; the orchestra continues playing it until Ann utters, “I made a mistake” (00:50:05-51:00). It should not be forgotten that Ann’s counterpart in the dream sequence is Ana: so long as there is music to accompany the dialogue above, fragment C may be a logical choice. On the other hand, we question the production sugar-coating the fragment.

Whereas it is exclusively in the dream sequence that the play-text refers to Gounod and his music, the production uses fragments from *Faust* rather liberally outside the dream sequence. Since the fragment which identifies the Devil in the dream sequence is not repeated anywhere else in the production, the recurrences of the Gounod music outside the dream sequence pose no danger of confusion. We nevertheless wonder why the music outside the dream sequence should derive from *Faust*.

3

The version of *Man and Superman* which Radio 3 broadcast in 1996 was produced and made not by the BBC but by Catherine Bailey Limited for that radio station.² The name of the production company is not mentioned by Anne Karpf when she reviews the version for *The Guardian*. It is purely in the contexts of the BBC Third Programme and Radio 3 that Karpf discusses the version. I will therefore refer to the version as the Radio 3 production throughout the rest of the essay. In her piece, the critic delivers a harsh verdict on the radio station having broadcast the whole *Man and Superman*. As Karpf puts it, “although [*Man and Superman*] was the first drama broadcast on the Third Programme, even 50 years ago the press questioned whether the audience could cope with almost five hours of Shaw at a stretch.” Karpf contends that “Radio 3 clearly hoped to offset length with glitter,” namely, “the starry cast,” and concludes her review by stating that “no wonder Shaw has fallen from favour.” Curiously enough, and like Billington in his review of the National Theatre production, Karpf makes no comment on any of the actual musical fragments in the Radio 3 production.

Listening to the recording of the Radio 3 production, we note that *Don Giovanni* underpins all the four acts in the play. Also, the production arranges the Mozart opera for flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon—it is not that the four instruments each correspond to the four characters in the dream sequence. The recording (H7968/1/1) tells us that the very first of the *Don Giovanni* fragments in the Radio 3 production gives a cue for the narrator, a male who reads some of the stage directions aloud, to start describing the setting for act 1: the wind quartet plays the opening melody in the duet between Don Giovanni and Zerlina in the opera (Mozart 93-94), over which the narrator recites selected passages from the stage directions (00:00:30-01:02). Act 1 also ends with a *Don Giovanni* fragment: the last line in the act, uttered by Tanner, is taken over by the wind quartet, which plays more melodies from the Giovanni-Zerlina duet (01:00:16-33).

In act 2, the character Henry Straker whistles a melody from the same duet (01:02:46-47, 01:13:48-14:05, 01:27:52-55, 01:27:58-28:06), even though the stage directions in the play-text do not specify the tune for Straker (*Man and Superman* 587, 595, 609). Indeed, nothing that transpires among the characters in act 2 explains why Straker should choose a melody from *Don Giovanni*. At the end of the act, the wind quartet plays a fragment which, in the score by Mozart (98), is the orchestral tutti that brings the Giovanni-Zerlina duet to a finish (01:30:24-40).

More fragments from the Mozart opera appear in act 3 in the Radio 3 production. The recording (H7968/1/5) tells us that, as far as musical accompaniments are concerned, the production makes no clear difference between the main narrative and the play-within-the-play, in other words, between the parts in act 3 which take place in the Sierra Nevada and the dream sequence. A case in point is the musical accompaniment for the narrator at the beginning of act 3—the narrator describes the setting for the main narrative over the wind quartet playing fragments that include “Mozart’s statue music.” Let us have a look in more detail. The quartet first performs a fragment from the overture to *Don Giovanni*, starting with the ascending and descending scales which, in the score by Mozart (2), appear in bars 23 to 26; anyone who is familiar with *Don Giovanni* will immediately relate those scales to the ascending and descending scales in the supper scene in act 2 of the opera, where the Statue sings (Mozart 408-10); the quartet then plays the opening 11 bars of the introduction to act 1 in the opera (Mozart 19), only to come back to the overture to perform bars 5-15 in it, where some broken chords and a melody appear (Mozart 1); people who are familiar with the opera should know that those broken chords and melody will reappear when the Statue sings in the supper scene in act 2 of the opera (Mozart 404-07); the quartet comes back to the introduction to act 1 of the opera, which continues until the Chief [of the brigands] (*Man and Superman* 617), one of the characters in act 3 in the Shaw play, starts uttering the first line of his speech (00:00:08-02:24).

It turns out that the Radio 3 production uses scales repeatedly in the dream sequence. Synthesised sound effects mark the beginning of the dream sequence, as in the National Theatre production; out of that cosmic soundscape emerges the wind quartet, which plays fragments A, B, and C; before starting playing fragment C, the quartet rather abruptly performs two of the ascending and descending scales that we heard at the beginning of act 3 (00:20:34-21:25). When the Old Woman “becomes” Ana, the quartet accompanies her transformation not

by performing fragment *C* but by playing another fragment from the opera, bars 77 to 84 in the overture (Mozart 6), and we do not associate that fragment with the “statue music” (00:28:31-40). The entrance of the Statue is accompanied by the quartet playing two of the ascending and descending scales again; the scales are taken over by synthesised sound effects, over which we hear the bassoon play the opening melody of the Statue’s song in the supper scene in act 2 of the opera (Mozart 404); the sound of the bassoon fades, leaving the cosmic soundscape to linger on until it is taken over by Don Juan’s “Ah, here you are, my friend” (00:32:15-48).

The recording tells us that, to accompany the Devil’s entrance, the wind quartet plays two of the ascending and descending scales yet again, backed by synthesised sound effects, and moves on to perform the broken chords that appear in the opening nine bars in act 4 scene 6 in *Faust* (Gounod 323); the music continues, deviating from the Gounod and being joined by the castanets, the tambourine, and the guitar; the stereotypically Spanish-flavoured arrangement of the broken chords coincides with the narrator reading the part of the stage directions which goes “*the Devil rises, very Mephistophelean, and not at all unlike Mendoza, though not so interesting*” (*Man and Superman* 643); to mark the Devil’s self-introduction to Ana, “Lucifer, at your service” (643), the quartet and the guitar, aided by the percussion instruments, play the ascending scale that appears in bar 8 of the above-mentioned nine bars in *Faust* (00:35:49-36:26). In short, Mozart’s ascending and descending scales in D minor are disturbed by, or “*adulterated with*,” Gounod’s broken chords and ascending scale in G minor.

Unlike in the National Theatre production, the Devil and the Statue sing “Vivan le femmine, viva il buon vino, sostegno e gloria d’umanità” (00:38:48-57), with the Statue trying to sound like a countertenor, which he claims he is (*Man and Superman* 641).

When Don Juan leaves Hell for Heaven, the wind quartet first goes back to the now almost iconic ascending and descending scales, which is followed by the Statue’s line “Bon voyage, Juan!”; the quartet then performs a bridging chord and plays “[*a faint echo of the first ghostly melody*,” that is, fragment *A* (01:46:54-47:05). The ascending and descending scales are played for the last time when the Devil, the Statue, and Ana exit the stage: we first hear synthesised sound effects, over which the quartet plays three of the ascending and descending scales; Ana’s “Stop!” halts the music; with the Statue’s “Let us proceed,” the quartet resumes playing the scales; we hear Ana’s “A father! a father for the Superman!” and the narrator’s lines from the stage directions (*Man and*

Superman 689) over the quartet performing four more bars beyond the scales (Mozart 3), which include two ascending broken chords; the synthesised soundscape lingers on until the narrator’s stage directions bring us back to the *real* world in the Sierra Nevada (01:49:36-50:39).

As mentioned above, music tends to travel rather smoothly between the main narrative and the play-within-the-play in the Radio 3 production. The musical fragment which marks the end of act 3, that is, the end of the main narrative in the act, contains the opening melody of the Statue’s song in the supper scene in act 2 of the Mozart opera (01:55:59-56:15)—the melody with which the Statue entered the stage in the dream sequence.

Listening to act 4 in the Radio 3 production (H7967/1/2), we note that all the musical fragments in that act are taken from *Don Giovanni*. None of the chords or melodies is new to us: the act begins with the narrator reading the opening stage directions aloud, which is accompanied by the quartet playing the opening 11 bars of the introduction to act 1 in the Mozart opera (00:00:08-27), in other words, the fragment that the production has used at the beginning of act 3. When act 4 finishes, which, of course, marks the end of the play itself, the quartet plays some melodies from the Giovanni-Zerlina duet (00:41:48-58), the melodies that we heard repeatedly in acts 1 and 2 in the production.

4

The orchestra in the National Theatre production and the wind quartet in the Radio 3 production perform fragments from *Don Giovanni* and *Faust* much more frequently than we might have expected: some of the characters in the dream sequence carry their musical identities even when the stage directions in the play-text indicate no music; a few of the musical identities are used as fragments outside the dream sequence, which is not what the play-text tells us; various other fragments from *Don Giovanni* and *Faust* also appear outside the dream sequence, which, again, has nothing to do with what the play-text states.

We probably should take into account the sheer length of the performance in any four-act production of *Man and Superman*—without music as a catalyst for the whole play, how could we possibly “cope with almost five hours of Shaw at a stretch”? Interestingly enough, in a letter dated 3 October 1946, Shaw writes that people should not “treat [his] printed text with blindly superstitious reverence,” that the text “must always be adapted intelligently to the studio, the screen, the stage, or whatever the physical conditions of performance may be” (To Peter Watts 780). The letter includes musical suggestions for a production of *Man*

and Superman—Shaw believes, for example, that a piece from George Frideric Handel’s *Messiah*, “For Unto Us a Child Is Born,” should accompany Ana’s “Superman” speech (779).

Nonetheless, the problem for both the National Theatre production and the Radio 3 production may be that, by letting *Don Giovanni* and *Faust* loose, as it were, the two productions have severed ties with scholars for whom the *scarcity* of music is the quintessence of *Man and Superman*. Harry White, in his *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination*, is a good example. The premise on which White stands is clear: after writing *The Perfect Wagnerite* and having satisfied “his duty [as a journalist] in regard to the promotion of music in general and Wagner in particular,” Shaw shifted his attention to writing plays that “would promote the ‘music of words’ at the expense of music itself” (149). The success of *Man and Superman*, according to White, hinges on Shaw the author being able to resist music for all its “seduction” (150):

Wagner taught [Shaw] something else, namely that opera could give way to music drama, and that music drama could give way to the drama of thought. . . . Shaw would examine the dreamworld of operatic discourse as an alternative to the play of ideas on which he is embarked, and which he has interrupted in order to bid farewell to the seduction and warmth of musical engagement. (150)

That, as far as White is concerned, explains why “[the strains of Mozart] will die at the sound of . . . Shavian interrogations” in the dream sequence (150). Using musical fragments across the acts, the National Theatre production and the Radio 3 production make a blunt statement, namely, that they have no intention of “bid[ding] farewell to” what Shaw—at least in the published play-text—“rejects” (White 150).

“[A] Blakean marriage of Heaven and Hell” is how Wisenthal describes the moment when *Don Giovanni* “encounter[s]” the Gounod music (290). That moment, however, occurs only once in the play-text. The National Theatre production has a penchant for *Faust*, which it uses repeatedly in and outside the dream sequence. Drawing on what Shaw states in the de facto preface to *Man and Superman*, we may claim the following: the more fragments from *Faust* there are in *Man and Superman*, the more “stained” with “sentimentality” the play will be. Indeed, if resisting “the seduction and warmth of musical engagement” proves difficult for anyone planning a production of *Man and Superman*, the least the

production can do is to make certain that the allure comes less from *Faust* and more from *Don Giovanni*. I would base that argument on various writings by Shaw, including a piece which was published in *The World* in December 1891. Shaw refers to Mozart and Gounod in the piece:

[I]f I do not care to rhapsodize much about Mozart, it is because I am so violently prepossessed in his favor that I am capable of supplying any possible deficiency in his work by my imagination. Gounod has devoutly declared that *Don Giovanni* has been to him all his life a revelation of perfection, a miracle, a work without fault. I smile indulgently at Gounod, since I cannot afford to give myself away so generously; . . . but I am afraid my fundamental attitude towards Mozart is the same as his. . . . Everyone appears a sentimental, hysterical bungler in comparison when anything brings [Mozart's] finest work vividly back to me. ("Mozart's Finality" 481-82; italics added)

Shaw turns Gounod into a representative of "everyone," namely, any composer *other than Mozart* in the history of western art music. If Gounod is a "bungler" par excellence, why should any production of *Man and Superman* let the audience hear the Gounod music more often than is necessary?

There is yet another way of looking at *Don Giovanni*: the Radio 3 production sends a strong message to the listener precisely because it fails to resist the allure of the Mozart opera. As we have seen in the opening section, Heller calls the whole *Man and Superman* a "paraphrasis" of *Don Giovanni*; we also remember that, for Grene, the dream sequence is "very undream-like," with Shaw's "discourse" retaining "clarity" in the sequence. The Mozart opera underpins all the acts in the Radio 3 production, which helps us grasp the five-hour-long narrative as a comprehensive "paraphrasis" and understand why the dream sequence reads so much like what goes on in the rest of the play. The irony is that, in her review of the Radio 3 production, Karpf does not comment on music in any sense. As we have seen in the previous section, she declares that Shaw is out of "favour." We wonder if Karpf has formed that opinion *despite* the music in the production she is reviewing.

Notes

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¹ The orchestral performance is pre-recorded.

² The information is given at the end of the recording of the Radio 3 production (H7967/1/2).

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